

# EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

(Issued under the Authority of the Minister for the Environment)

*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

List of Threatened Ecological Communities Amendment (EC170) Instrument 2021

## Background

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (**Act**) provides for the protection of the environment and conservation of biodiversity, including the protection and conservation of threatened ecological communities.

Under section 181 of the Act, the Minister must, by legislative instrument, establish a list of threatened ecological communities (**List**) divided into the following categories: Critically endangered; Endangered; and Vulnerable.

Under paragraph 184(a) of the Act, the Minister may, by legislative instrument, amend the list of threatened ecological communities by including items in the List in accordance with Part 13, Division 1, Subdivision AA of the Act.

## Purpose of the Instrument

The purpose of this instrument is to amend the list by including in the endangered category: *Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics* as recommended by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (**Committee**), having regard to its eligibility for the endangered category under subsection 182(2) of the Act.

The Committee concluded that the Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics met the criteria specified in regulation 7.02 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*, as follows:

- Criterion 1 as **endangered** because it has undergone a **severe** decline in geographic distribution;
- Criterion 2 as **endangered** because its geographic distribution is **very restricted**, and the nature of its distribution makes it likely that the action of a threatening process could cause it to be lost in the **near future**; and
- Criterion 4 as **endangered** because it has undergone a **severe** reduction in integrity across most of its geographic distribution, as indicated by a **severe** degradation of the community or its habitat.

On the basis of the assessment and advice of the Committee, the Minister was satisfied that this ecological community is eligible to be included in the **endangered** category. In deciding to include it in the List, the Minister only considered matters that relate to whether the ecological community is eligible to be included in that category, and the effect that including the ecological community in that category could have on the survival of the ecological community.

## **Consultation**

Consultation to amend the List under the Act to include the ecological community was undertaken before the legislative instrument was made in accordance with the process outlined in Part 13, Division 1, Subdivision AA of the Act.

A draft assessment was placed on public exhibition, and public comments were sought as required by the Act. Parties with relevant expertise were directly consulted regarding their views. All public submissions received were considered by the Committee and forwarded to the Minister on 30 July 2021 for consideration.

This instrument is a legislative instrument for the purposes of the *Legislation Act 2003*.

This instrument will commence on the day after it is registered on the Federal Register of Legislation.

Authority: section 181 and paragraph 184(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

## **Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights**

*Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*

### **List of Threatened Ecological Communities Amendment (EC170) Instrument 2021**

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

#### **Overview of the Legislative Instrument**

The purpose of this Instrument is to amend the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* list of threatened ecological communities by including the ‘Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics’ in the endangered category of the list.

The Lowland tropical rainforest of the Wet Tropics has been included in the endangered category of the list because it met the following criteria: it has undergone a severe decline in geographic distribution; its geographic distribution is very restricted, and the nature of its distribution makes it likely that the action of a threatening process could cause it to be lost in the near future; and because it has undergone a severe reduction in integrity across most of its geographic distribution, as indicated by a severe degradation of the community or its habitat.

#### **Human rights implications**

This Legislative Instrument does not engage any of the applicable rights or freedoms.

#### **Conclusion**

This Legislative Instrument is compatible with human rights as it does not raise any human rights issues.

**The Hon Sussan Ley MP**  
**Minister for the Environment**